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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 001135

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DEPT FOR AF/E AND A/S FRAZER

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [MOPS](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)
SUBJECT: SOMALIA EMBASSY MEDIA OUTREACH

Classified by PolOff Mitch Benedict. Reasons
1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) On March 7 the Embassy of the Somali Republic in Nairobi held a media conference and issued the following statement.

Begin Text:

Embassy of the Somali Republic
Nairobi -Kenya

GOOD MORNING LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, MEMBERS OF
THE PRESS:

First I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to this media conference and also inform you that from today, the Embassy will be holding a weekly media conference every Wednesday at 10:00 am.

The aim of such meetings will be to brief the media and the public at large, the latest development in Somalia and Transitional Federal Government of Somalia's effort to sustain peace and stability to the people of Somalia.

All are welcome.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As you might be aware, 400 Ugandan Peace keeping forces, which are part of the 8,000 AU forces, under the flag of the African Union (AU) arrived in Mogadishu International Airport yesterday March 6, 2007.

The 8,000 AU forces mandate is to recruit and train the Somali army in different fields of security operations, assist the Somalia community in any given humanitarian assignment and also guard and protect government officials and buildings. The Ugandan troops are the vanguard of a larger African Union force authorized by the United Nations to help the government assert its authority.

This is a major step by the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia in maintaining peace and tranquility among the people of Somalia.

As we all know, Somalia has been a II collapsed state II undergoing continuous civil-war strife by former warlords and Islamic extremists who made Somalia one of

the centers for international terrorism in East Africa, and a place for training warfare, explosive, assembling and a launching pad for attacks against neighboring countries.

But of now, it's clear the people of Somalia are tired of war and are ready for peace. Their support for the Uganda peacekeeping force is overwhelming and the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia is doing all it can to ensure peace for the Somali people is guaranteed.

However, having said that, there still remain few remnants of the Islamic extremists who don't want peace and stability in Somalia. As a result, the Government has initiated a community police security programme whereby it has already recruited and reintegrated over 8,000 former militias who are currently under intensive training in Balidogle -90 km from Mogadishu.

We believe these young people will play a great role in securing peace in their own country and ensuring economic stability is retained. Also, several youth groups have volunteered to patrol the crime prone areas in Mogadishu with the Police forces.

In addition, His Excellency President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed last week launched the National Reconciliation Congress (NRC) with an aim and objective to bring about good governance and peaceful Somalia. The Congress shall be led by an Independent Committee composing of national eminent persons of

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renowned reputation within the Somali Nation and abroad. The Committee is independent from the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) in their deliberations while respecting the Transitional Federal Charter.

As we speak now, the Preparatory works of the National Reconciliation Congress has started and will continue in the next forty-five days. Over 3,000 people will participate, representing all stakeholders of Somali society. The Congress shall be convened in Mogadishu on April 16, 2007.

Similarly, the Government is planning to relocate to Mogadishu immediately after the deployment of the AU peacekeeping force in Somalia. This would enable it to serve its people more efficiently and be closer to them. In fact, the President, the Speaker of the Parliament and the Prime Minister reside in Mogadishu.

At the same time TFG is working very hard reinforcing local, regional and Federal political and administrative entities.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Let me comment on the prisoners of war and foreign fighters who were arrested during the removal of the Islamic Court Union (ICU).

I would like to inform all members of the International Communities, NGO's, Human Rights Groups that the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic would respect and uphold the rule of law and in due process, all international treaties signed by Somalia concerning the prisoners of war and the arrest of militants foreign fighters suspected of terrorism in Somalia. Also the Somali Government is in contact separately with the concerned Embassies and ICRC in regard of the arrested foreign fighters. Also, the government is planning to enact an

anti-terrorism law which will be regulating all criminal acts committed on Somali territory. The Cabinet has approved the anti-terrorism law, the Parliament is expected to pass the law soon.

And lastly, the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia is greatly concerned over the Hijacking of a United Nation World Food Programme Chartered vessel MV Rozen off the coast of Somalia on February 25 with the crew of 6 Sri Lankans and 6 Kenyans and also the recent kidnapping of Thai Nationals in Puntland area.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to assure the concerned families that the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia is in close contact with WFP, Puntland Authority, and the vessel owner to ensure immediate safe return of the crew. The Government has also appealed to the hijackers to unconditionally release the crew so that they would join their families. Also I would to thank WFP's continuous help on delivering urgent food aid to Somalia.

Nairobi. March 7, 2007

End Text.

12. (C) The media conference held by the Embassy on March 7 is the first of what we are told will be regular Wednesday morning media conferences. We spoke to the Somali Ambassador prior to the media conference and urged him to address the issue of the WFP piracy case, and also the case of the Thai nationals being held hostage in Puntland. The Somalia Transitional Federal Government (TFG) must work better to communicate with the people of Somalia, and we intend to use our close working relationship with members of the Somali Embassy to help shape their messages for future media conferences.

RANNEBERGER